THE MEASURE
A JOURNAL OF POETRY

The Unicorn, by E. Merrill Root - - - - - -
The Burial of St. Brendan, by Padraic Colum -
A Note on John Keats' *Endymion* - - - - - -

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The Measure

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The Unicorn

I HEARD a cry come down the sky,
A cry of lure and scorn:
"Oh who, on the pastures of the Moon,
Will capture the Unicorn?"

I could not sleep, I could not sleep,
So at last on the lonely meadows
I walked where the vain sun chalks the moon
Mid the ache of lavender shadows.

In that cold blue anguish where sunbeams languish
I lay and watched the bubble
Of the far-off earth that seems to the moon
Too sunny a globe for trouble.

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When suddenly, faint, fantastical,
    On the moon's far sunless bourne,
I heard across the chalken plains
    The hoof of the Unicorn.

And over the Mountains of the Moon,
    Down lavender gulf and valley,
Alone, aloof, on ivory hoof,
    He came in a gorgeous sally.

Like the shapes that swim on a bubble's rim,
    Or lurk in a crystal ball,
Like the shapes that cumber a madman's slumber,
    He came chimerical.

Like the moon's own margent, his sheen was argent,
    And ivory-white his horn:
A dream of Nature, a heretic creature,
    The lonely Unicorn.

Like a masted galleon, or crested stallion,
    He came in his lordly power;
Yet a silk-sailed shallop (so light was his gallop),
    Or a moth on a silver flower.

In stately gambol or whimsical ramble,
    Like dance of centaur or satyr,
He came where I lay with my heart's mad play
    At the edge of a lunar crater.

Then I cast the rope of my maddest thought,
    And it caught his ivory horn:
There we stood a moment face to face,
    The Man and the Unicorn.

Child of the moon, he had never known
    A child of the earth. And I—
While he stared in the daze of his proud amaze—
    Had leaped on his back. The sky

Was full of a shaken dice of stars,
    The moon rocked to and fro
As the deck might dip on a reeling ship;
    Then it streamed like a river of snow.

Then the very moon like a toy balloon
    Went floating across the sky;
And we were off for Aldebaran,
    The Unicorn and I.

The stars blew white about our flight
    Like petals of orchard trees;
Like a bird-cage tossed a moment and lost
    We passed the Pleiades.

Yet still I bestrode him and proudly I rode him
    For all he might gallop and toss,
From the lonely lamp of the barren Pole
    To the blur of the Southern Cross.

I clung to the horn of the Unicorn
    While he sprang from Vega to Mars;
Or forded the spray of the Milky Way
    In a bubble and foam and stars

We galloped past suns like roaring lions
    With manes of fantastic flame;
We girdled the girth of the deafening Earth;
    Then back to the moon we came.

And the Unicorn when he touched his hoof
    Once more to the chalk of the Moon—
When he felt the shadows of lavender meadows
    Once more around him strewn—

With a mad rebound scorned the lunar ground
    Like a fierce untamable stallion,
And flung me off, amid reeling stars,
    Down, down on the moon's medallion.

But I did not care, and I do not care:
    For I am the one man born
Who has galloped past Mars and the Starry Bear,
    Who has ridden the Unicorn!

E. Merrill Root.

To One Who Fears for Me

THEN would you fear for sunset in the winter,
    Prophetic watchfire of an icy darkness,
Quickly burnt out in snow and empty silence,
That you should fear for me?

You need not fear; I understand my madness.
These riotous emotions spent in words
But light the clouds beneath a quickening twilight,
And soon I shall feel nothing.

Offer instead of fear one prayer for me:
That sunset may endure a little longer,
That not too soon an apathy of snow
May curtain Last Love's face.

Eda Lou Walton

Epistle

LET us treat of ecstasy!
For it occurs to me that we will die.
Not of the soul's phosphorescent sear;
Nor Gods and gaunt philosophy,
And vagaries of insubstantial essence. . . .
Only of the corporeal now and here!
Your hand and my hand and the heavy sense
Of being and fleeting. No doubts about this flesh:
Of all uncertainties only is sure
The click of its forever incredible stupor
Death. For the instant then we will not play
With the bright gauze of eternity. . . .
But in the hard, locked minute, blazing free
The flame of stark and naked mortalness
Let us treat of ecstasy!
And hold my heart and clench my hand
That together we will be so sped beyond
The avenues of graves even the dead
May rise, and turn, and stare astonished. . . .

W. L.

Exotic Perfume

AT autumn eve, with pillowed lips and closing eyes,
I breathe the perfumes of thy sultry body bare,
And find again the forfeit, warm, Lethean air
Of isles eloigned in sleep beneath enchanted skies;
Where the far-lifted suns flame-heavy and unfalling
Illume strange arbours pleached with many-savoured fruit,
That arch the simple love and passion absolute
Of sinewy men and candid girls who need no calling.
Yea, wafted on thy body's perfume, I have flown
And sought the port where many prows are met together,
Borne by the black monsoon to find a golden weather;
And subtly there may calm and cradled sense is haunted
By airs compounding the green spice of trees unknown
In one slow philtre with the songs by sailors chanted.

The Remorse of the Dead

MY sable love, when you at last are lain
Unsought upon the lone sepulchral bed,
And darkly keep your brothel with the dead,—
Your roomless vault that weeps with fetid rain;
Yea, when the ponderous carven shaft unshaken
Is the one weight your passionate nipples know,
And grinds you down and will not let you go
To find again your faithless lechers, taken
By fairer trulls—then, then, O harlot love,
The grave, which has my very voice, will sigh
All night about your sleep-derided corse,
Whispering ever: "In the days above,
You dreamt not how the unslumbering wantons lie,
Gnawed by the worms which are the last remorse."

Clark Ashton Smith

The Burial of Saint Brendan

ON the third day from this (Saint Brendan said)
I will be with my fathers, going hence,
For God will then a mighty trumpet blow:
And from the prison of this body then
I shall go forth; make ready, you, to go
With what remains to Cluan Hy-many,
For there my resurrection I'd have be.

But you will know how hard they'll strive to gain
My resurrection for this place, and keep
My body for the mould where I was born:
The wagon that our goods are carried in—
Have it yoked up between the night and morn,
And, when the breath is from my body gone,
Bear it without; the wagon lay it on;

And cover it with goods that's taken hence:
"The goods of Brendan is what's here," you'll say
To those who'll halt you; they will pass you then:
But you'll meet one who will not; a soldier he,
Armed and ugly, a putter-down of men,
Curryn his name, blind of the left eye:
He'll halt the wagon, and on you he'll cry:

"What bear you hence?" and he will question you,
Putting you down; he'll to the wagon go,
And, 'spite your pleading, pull the gear about:
He'll come upon my body where it's laid;
Then this man Curryn will raise up a shout:
"What means this move? With us his burial,
For we would give him reverence over all!"

And then to that that's on the wagon laid,
"O saint of God, be with us still," he'll cry
"Your resurrection we would have with ours."
He'll push it back until the wagon wheel,
Making a trench, the wayside gravel scours:
You'll look; and in the wayside rut, behold!
All glistening there, a thumb-sized piece of gold!

Offer to him the gold was sent by God
To be my body's ransom, but that man
Will take it not, nor let the wagon by:
"We would be sanctified in this body's rise,
And have a portion in its bliss," he'll cry;
"Not all your hands could hold would make a bribe,
No, nor the Chieftain's power in my tribe."

Then you will say, "Unless eternal life,
"You would have forfeit, let this body pass:
"Else the cold flag of Hell will be your bed."
And say, that he may know how sure it is,
The doom that you have cast upon his head,
"You, Curryn, blind of an eye, have even now
"Planned in your heart a faithless thing to do."

"Usurp the Chieftain's power in your tribe
"By slaying all between you and that place,
"Uncles and foster-brothers, man and youth."
He'll know then that Hell's flagstone is no doom
Uttered by lips unknowing, but is sooth:
He'll beat his breast, and let it go, that load,
And you will pass, mounting the ridge of road.

And, looking back, you'll see beside that man
Tinkers and tailors, soldiers, farmers, smiths,
The people of the place, all stirred up then.
He'll hold them back; you'll go upon your way,
Leaving behind you all those stark men
For whom my virtue was a legacy
That they would profit in, each a degree.

As though it were indeed some chalice, staff,
Casket or crozier that they might come to,
And show to those who chanced upon the way;
And have, not knowing how the work was done,
In scrolls and figures, and in bright inlay;
Whence came the gold and silver that they prize,
The blue enamels and the torquoises!

I, Brendan, had a name came from the sea,
I was the first to sail the outer main,
And past forelands and all fastnesses:
I passed the voiceless anchorets, their isles,
Saw the ice-palaces upon the seas,
Mentioned Christ's name to men cut off from men,
Heard the whales snort, and saw the Kraken.

And on a wide-branched, green, and glistening tree
Beheld the birds that had been angels erst:
Between the earth and heaven 'twas theirs to wing:
Fallen from high they were, but they had still
Music of Heaven's court: I heard them sing:
Even now that island of the unbeached coast
I see, and see the white resplendent host!

For this they'd have my body in this place,
Their hillside, and my resurrection be
Out of the mould that they with me would share;
But I have chosen Cluan for my ground,
A happy place; some grace came to me there:
And you, as you go towards it, to men say
Should any ask you on that long highway:

"Brendan is here who had great saints for friends:
"Ita, who reared him on a mother's knee,
"Enda, who from his fastness blessed his sail:
"Then Brighid, she who had the flaming heart,
"And Colum-cille, prime of all the Gael;
"Gildas of Britain, wisest child of light;"
And saying this, drive through the falling night.

Padraic Colum

Two Songs

I

WHEN the little airs of April
Are blowing over the hill
Waking an old desire
And a laggard will,
Love, we shall rise early,
And like snow on a stone
To the warm sun of springtime
Be gone, and be gone.

II

O love, that you and I
Were in a green land
Walking through tall grasses
Hand in hand,
And coming at last to a small house
Under a willow tree
That should whisper through a long night
To you and me.

A. J. M. Smith

Thick of Sight, and Thin of Blood

HIS spleen is swollen, and he quarrels with his friends. He sneers at the glad one, who was moved by the Drayton sonnet in our last number to exclaim, "Aha! *we* are as good as those Elizabethans!". He nods in sour agreement with the sad one, who cries, "What little men we are!". He compiles charts proving that the life of a modern poet is exactly two years, during which he writes nineteen poems, sonnets included.

He has been reading *Endymion,* and is clearly no fit person to be trusted with a poetry magazine.

What price long poems? Poe thought anything over a hundred lines too much; and it is perhaps true that no poem any longer can be good all the way through. Still, a poet might think it worth a page or two of going dead to come alive again with

> ". . . cold, O cold indeed
> "Were her fair limbs, and like a common weed
> "The sea swell took her hair."

But who of us is man enough to essay four thousand lines of the stretched metre of an antique song? Perhaps both we and the fashion of brevity are determined by curious causes: we hope to know for sure next month when we read Mr. Sinclair's book.

Two poems in this number are long, as length is reckoned now-a-days. By that same reckoning, three more stanzas would have disqualified *The Eve of St. Agnes* from *The Nation's* poetry contest; and who today, we ask you, would print any such poem except for winning some such prize?

Meanwhile, red John Keats is in his grave, and the thousand bitters of what he knew to be his failure are mocking at our impotent success.

Rolfe Humphries

The Measure ❧ *A Journal of Poetry*

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Edited by Leonie Adams, Joseph Auslander, Louise Bogan, Padraic Colum, Rolfe Humphries, Louise Townsend Nicholl, George O'Neil, Pitts Sanborn, Genevieve Taggard. From these nine an acting editor and an assistant are elected quarterly by the board.

Associate Editors—Hervey Allen, Maxwell Anderson, and Frank Ernest Hill.

ACTING EDITOR: ROLFE HUMPHRIES

News and Comment

ELINOR WYLIE, feeling that pressure of prose and private duties prevents her from being an active editor of poetry, has resigned from the board. Regretting this loss, the editors are pleased to announce that the vacancy has been filled by the selection of Leonie Adams. Miss Adams has appeared in the Untermeyer anthology of modern British and American poetry; her poems, *Death and the Lady,* and *Bird and Bosom,* recently printed by the *New Republic,* seem to us among the most remarkable and distinctive poetry of the year, to say the least; her first book, *Those Not Elect,* is forthcoming.

THE GYPSY, a new poetry magazine, to be published in Cincinnati, Ohio, made its bow March 1, 1925. It will interest bibliophiles as well as poets and poetry lovers. For it will feature from issue to issue hitherto unpublished poems by Walter Savage Landor, Robert Louis Stevenson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Lionel Johnson, Charles Dickens and Emily Bronte. It will print poems by such noted writers of today as James Stephens, George Moore, John Drinkwater and John Masefield, and also poems of merit by writers as yet unknown to fame. There will be translations of foreign poetry attracting interest, articles on poetry and reviews

of volumes of poetry. The magazine will be issued quarterly the first being the spring number. Subscription is one dollar a year and may be sent to H. A. Conley Joslin, 4811 Section Avenue, Norwood, Ohio; George Elliston, Times-Star, Cincinnati, Ohio, or Halley Groesbeck, Central Martanna, Covington, Ky., who comprise the editorial board.

C. C. BIRCHARD AND COMPANY, Music Publishers, 221 Columbus Avenue, Boston, Mass., offer a prize of $200 for the best text suitable for a musical setting submitted to them before June 1, 1925. The poems will be judged according to their merit as poetry and their suitability for use in a Cantata. The poem should be from 100 to 150 lines long. It should be borne in mind that excellence in this type of composition for musical setting requires fairly short lines and varying metrical or rhythmic effects. The theme of the poem might well be youthful and vigorous, embodying the idea of struggle followed by victory.

The Company reserves the privilege of purchasing at an agreed price any unsuccessful entry.

The manuscripts must be typewritten and entered anonymously; but each must bear some identifying mark, word or phrase, and must be accompanied by a sealed envelope enclosing the full name and address of the competitor, and bearing an identifying mark corresponding to the one used on the manuscript. Manuscripts must not be rolled or folded. Return postage must also be enclosed.

All manuscripts should be addressed to C. C. Birchard and Company, 221 Columbus Avenue, Boston, Mass., and marked POETRY CONTEST.

CONTRIBUTORS

The only name that requires introduction this month is that of A. J. M. Smith, who is a senior student at McGill University, and edits the literary supplement to the *McGill Daily*.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, OF THE MEASURE, A JOURNAL OF POETRY, PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT CORNWALL, N. Y., FOR APRIL 1, 1925.

State of New Jersey, }
County of Union, } ss.

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Louise Townsend Nicholl, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the business manager of The Measure, A Journal of Poetry, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

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Managing Editor—None.

Business Manager—Louise Townsend Nicholl, 449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Joseph Auslander, Louise Bogan, Padraic Colum, Rolfe Humphries, Louise Townsend Nicholl, George O'Neil, Pitts Sanborn, Genevieve Taggard, Elinor Wylie, all of 449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding I per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL, Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 14th day of March, 1925.

T. J. NICHOLL, Notary Public.

(My commission expires March 6, 1928).

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